

**GABRIELLE GIFFORDS**

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0308**

**COMMITTEES:**

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

April 9, 2010

Lowell McAdam  
President and CEO  
Verizon Wireless  
Verizon Communications Inc.  
140 West St.  
29<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. McAdam:

I am writing with an urgent request for your help in addressing a very serious public safety problem that is growing by the day in my Congressional District in Southern Arizona.

The ranchers and other residents who live in this area close to the border with Mexico are put at increasing risk from violence and threats to their families. They are unable to contact law enforcement agencies when they are confronted by drug smugglers who have brought their violent actions into our country.

On March 27 a well-respected rancher was murdered near the U.S.-Mexico border. Robert Krentz, whose family has ranched in the area for more than a century, was shot and killed on his ranch northeast of Douglas, Arizona. Law enforcement officials indicate that the assailant was a smuggler who escaped in to Mexico. This murder is the latest in a disturbing trend of home invasions, burglaries, assaults and other lawless activities along the international border.

Since this tragic event, I have met with local ranchers to get their advice on what should be done to decrease the violence and prevent another death. I have sent their recommendations and mine to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. This week I convened a conference call so that the Secretary could hear directly from representatives of the ranching community in Cochise County. They let us know how fearful they and their families have become as a result of the murder of their friend and neighbor. They told us that one of the most important steps that must be taken is to improve electronic communication in the area.

It is evident that the lack of reliable electronic communications is a factor in the growing public safety problem faced by area residents. It also contributed to a delay in the search for Mr. Krentz

once he was reported missing and in the coordination of an immediate hunt for his killer who was able to escape in to Mexico. Ranchers carry both radios and cell phones but they are isolated and endangered when they encounter drug and people smugglers on their lands, which can exceed thousands of acres.

The frustration caused by the lack of reliable electronic communications became apparent to me on March 31 as I traveled from Tucson to Apache, Arizona for my meeting with ranchers. Secretary Napolitano and I attempted to contact each other numerous times before the meeting began but were unable to do so due to the lack of effective coverage in the area.

In the interest of the security and safety of your customers, I am asking for your immediate assistance to fill this dangerous communications gap.

I am aware that Verizon has portable cell phone towers that can be located in areas where coverage is inadequate or unavailable. These towers were installed in Arizona to provide critical security during the most recent presidential campaign. There is a need to do so again to provide security to the families who are under fire from smugglers in Southern Arizona. This emergency solution would go a long way to lowering the fears and increasing the safety of the good people who live in this rural community.

I am working closely with the Secretary of Homeland Security to bring additional Border Patrol agents and assets to the area, and I hope that Verizon will join us in this effort. Working together I know that we can improve public safety and protect the families who live along the border.

Members of my staff in both Washington, D.C. and Southern Arizona stand ready to work with Verizon to implement this proposal as quickly as possible.

I look forward to your earliest response and the support I am sure you will want to provide.

Sincerely Yours,

  
Gabrielle Giffords.  
Member of Congress